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Technology, research and development

(Chapter XII of the draft programme of action
of the Conference)

Text submitted by the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Lionel Hurst (Antigua and Barbuda) (Working Group I) on the basis of negotiations held on document A/CONF.171/PC/5

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Chapter XII

TECHNOLOGY, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

A. Basic data collection, analysis and dissemination

Basis for action

12.1. Valid, reliable, timely, culturally relevant and internationally comparable data form the basis for policy and programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. While there have been marked improvements in the availability of population and related development data following important advances made during the past two decades in the methodologies and technology for data collection and analysis, many gaps remain with regard to the quality and coverage of baseline information, including vital data on births and deaths, as well as the continuity of data sets over time. Gender and ethnicity-specific information, which is needed to enhance and monitor the sensitivity of development policies and programmes, is still insufficient in many areas. Measurement of migration, particularly at the regional and international levels, is also among the areas least valid and least adequately covered. As a matter of principle, individuals, organizations and developing countries should have access, on a no-cost basis, to the data and findings based on research carried out in their own countries, including those maintained by other countries and international agencies.

Objectives

12.2. The objectives are:

(a) To establish a factual basis for understanding and anticipating the interrelationships of population and socio-economic, including environmental, variables, and for improving programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;

(b) To strengthen national capacity to seek new information and meet the need for basic data collection, analysis and dissemination, giving particular attention to information classified by age, sex, ethnicity and different geographical units, in order to use the findings in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of overall sustainable development strategies and foster international cooperation, including such cooperation at the regional and subregional levels;

(c) To ensure political commitment to, and understanding of, the need for data collection on a regular basis and the analysis, dissemination and full utilization of data.

Actions

12.3. Governments of all countries, particularly developing countries, assisted as appropriate through bilateral cooperation and international organizations and, where necessary, through interregional, regional and subregional

cooperation, should strengthen their national capacity to carry out sustained and comprehensive programmes on collection, analysis, dissemination and utilization of population and development data. Particular attention should be given to the monitoring of population trends and the preparation of demographic projections and to the monitoring of progress towards the attainment of the health, education, gender, ethnic and social-equity goals, and of service accessibility and quality of care, as stated in the present Programme of Action.

12.4. Programmes for the collection, processing, analysis and timely dissemination and utilization of population and related development data should include disaggregation, including gender disaggregation, coverage and presentation compatible with the needs of effective programme implementation on population and development. Interaction between the community of data users and data providers should be promoted in order to enable data providers to respond better to user needs. Research should be designed, taking into account legal and ethical standards, and carried out in consultation and partnership with, and with the active participation of, local communities and institutions and the findings thereof should be made accessible and available to policy makers, decision makers, planners and managers of programmes for their timely use. Comparability should be ensured in all research and data collection programmes.

12.5. Comprehensive, reliable, qualitative as well as quantitative databases, allowing linkages between population, education, health, poverty, family well-being, environment, and development issues and providing information dissaggregated at appropriate and desired levels, should be established and maintained by all countries, to meet the needs of research as well as those of policy and programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Special attention should be given to assess and measure the quality and accessibility of care through the development of suitable indicators.

12.5. bis Demographic, socio-economic and other relevant information networks should be created or strengthened, where appropriate, at the national, regional and global levels to facilitate monitoring the implementation of programmes of action and activities on population, environment and development at the national, regional and global levels.

12.6. All data collection and analysis activities should give due consideration to gender-disaggregation, enhancing knowledge on the position and role of gender in social and demographic processes. In particular, in order to provide a more accurate picture of women's current and potential contribution to economic development, data collection should delineate more precisely the nature of women's social and labour force status and to make that a basis for policy and programme decisions on improving women's income. Such data should address, inter alia, women's unpaid economic activities in the family and in the informal sector.

12.6. bis (a) Training programmes in statistics, demography and population and development studies should be designed and implemented at the national and regional levels, particularly in developing countries, with enhanced technical and financial support through international cooperation and greater national resources.

12.6. bis (b) All countries, with the support of appropriate organizations, should strengthen the collection and analysis of demographic data, including international migration data, in order to achieve a better understanding of that phenomenon and thus support the formulation of national and international policies on international migration.

B. [Sexual and reproductive] health research

Basis for action

12.7. Research, in particular biomedical research, has been instrumental in giving more and more people access to a greater range of safe and effective modern methods of [fertility regulation]. However, not all persons can find a [family-planning] method that suits them and the range of choices available to men is more limited than that available to women, and the growing incidence of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, demands substantially higher investments in new methods of prevention, diagnosis and treatment. In spite of greatly reduced funding for [sexual and reproductive health] research, prospects for developing and introducing new [contraceptive and fertility regulation] methods and products have been promising. Improved collaboration and coordination of activities internationally will increase cost-effectiveness, but a significant increase in support from Governments and industry is needed to bring a number of potential new, safe and affordable methods to fruition, especially [barrier methods]. This research needs to be guided at all stages by gender perspectives, particularly women's, and the needs of users, and be carried out in strict conformity with internationally accepted legal, ethical, medical and scientific standards for biomedical research.

Objectives

12.8. The objectives are:

(a) To contribute to the understanding of factors affecting universal [sexual and reproductive health, and to expand reproductive choice];

(b) To ensure the initial and continued safety, quality and health aspects of [fertility regulation methods];

(c) To ensure that all people have the opportunity to achieve and maintain sound [sexual and reproductive health], the international community should mobilize the full spectrum of basic biomedical, social and behavioural and programme-related research on [reproductive health and sexuality].

Actions

12.9. Governments, assisted by the international community and donor agencies, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and the academic community, should increase support for basic and applied biomedical, technological, clinical, epidemiological and social science research to strengthen reproductive health services, including the improvement of existing and the development of new [fertility regulation] methods that meet users' needs and are acceptable,

easy to use, safe, free of long- and short-term side effects and second generation effects, effective, affordable, suitable for different age and cultural groups, and for different phases of the reproductive cycle. Testing and introduction of all new technologies should be continually monitored to avoid potential abuse. Specifically, areas that need increased attention should include [barrier methods, both male and female, for fertility control and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, as well as microbicides and viricides, which may or may not prevent pregnancy.]

12.10. High priority should also be given to the development of new [fertility regulation methods] for men. Special research should be undertaken on factors inhibiting male participation in order to enhance male involvement and responsibility in family planning. In conducting [sexual and reproductive] health research, special attention should be given to the needs of adolescents in order to develop suitable policies and programmes and appropriate technologies to meet their [sexual and reproductive] health needs. Special priority should be given to research on sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and research on infertility.

12.11. To expedite the availability of improved and new methods of [fertility regulation], efforts must be made to increase the involvement of industry, including industry in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. A new type of partnership between the public and private sectors, including women and consumer groups, is needed that would mobilize the experience and resources of industry while protecting the public interest. National drug and device regulatory agencies should be actively involved in all stages of the development process to ensure that all legal and ethical standards are met. Developed countries should assist research programmes in developing countries and countries with economies in transition with their knowledge, experience and technical expertise and promote the transfer of appropriate technologies to them. The international community should facilitate the establishment of manufacturing capacities for [fertility regulation commodities] in developing countries, particularly the least developed among them, and countries with economies in transition.

12.12. All research on [fertility regulation and sexual and reproductive health] products must be carried out in adherence to internationally accepted ethical and technical standards and cultural conditions for biomedical research. Special attention needs to be given to the continuous surveillance of contraceptive safety and side effects. Users', in particular women's, perspectives and women's organizations should be incorporated into all stages of the research and development process.

12.13. [Unsafe abortion is a major threat to the health and lives of women]. Research to understand and better address the determinants and consequences of induced abortion, including its effects on subsequent fertility, reproductive and mental health and contraceptive practice, should be promoted, as well as research on treatment of complications of abortions and post-abortion care.

12.13. bis There should be enhanced research on natural [fertility regulation methods], looking for more effective procedures to detect the moment of ovulation during the menstrual cycle and after child-birth.

C. Social and economic research

Basis for action

12.14. During the past several decades, the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of population policies, programmes and activities have benefited from the findings of social and economic research highlighting how population change results from and impacts on complex interactions of social, economic and environmental factors. Nevertheless, some aspects of these interactions are still poorly understood and knowledge is lacking, especially with regard to developing countries, in areas relevant to a range of population and development policies, particularly concerning indigenous practices. Social and economic research is clearly needed to enable programmes to take into account the views of their intended beneficiaries, especially women, the young and other less empowered groups, and to respond to the specific needs of those groups and of communities. Research regarding the interrelations between global or regional economic factors and national demographic processes is required. Improved quality of services can be achieved only where quality has been defined by both users and providers of services and where women are actively involved in decision-making and service delivery.

Objectives

12.15. The objectives are:

(a) To promote socio-cultural and economic research that assists in the design of programmes, activities and services to improve the quality of life and meet the needs of individuals, families and communities, in particular all underserved groups;*

(b) To promote the use of research findings to improve the formulation of policies and the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects that improve the welfare of families and the needy to enhance their quality, efficiency and client-sensitivity, and to increase the national and international capacity for such research;

(c) To understand how [sexual and reproductive behaviour] occurs in varying socio-cultural contexts, and to understand the importance of that context for the design and implementation of service programmes.

Actions

12.16. Governments, funding agencies and research organizations should encourage and promote socio-cultural and economic research on relevant population policies and programmes, including indigenous practices, especially with regard to

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* Children, adolescents, women, the aged, the disabled, indigenous peoples, rural populations, urban populations, migrants, refugees, displaced persons and slum-dwellers.

interlinkages between population, poverty alleviation, environment, sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

12.17. Socio-cultural and economic research should be built into population and development programmes and strategies in order to provide guidance for programme managers on ways and means of reaching underserved clients and responding to their needs. To this end, programmes should provide for operations research, evaluation research and other applied social science research. This research should be participatory in character. Mechanisms should be established with the aim of ensuring that research findings are incorporated into the decision-making process.

12.18. Policy-oriented research, at the national and international levels, should be undertaken on areas beset by population pressures, poverty, over-consumption patterns, destruction of ecosystems and degradation of resources, giving particular attention to the interactions between those factors. Research should also be done on development and improvement of methods with regard to sustainable food production and crop and livestock systems in both developed and developing countries.

12.19. Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations concerned, funding agencies and research organizations are urged to give priority to research on the linkages between women's roles and status and demographic and development processes. Among the vital areas for research are changing family structures; family well-being; the interactions between women's and men's diverse roles, including their time use, access to power and decision-making and control over resources; associated norms, laws, values and beliefs; and the economic and demographic outcomes of gender inequality. Women should be involved at all stages of gender research planning and efforts should be made to recruit and train more female researchers.

12.20. Given the changing nature and extent of the spatial mobility of population, research to improve the understanding of the causes and consequences of migration and mobility, whether internal or international, is urgently needed. To provide a sound foundation for such research, special efforts need to be made to improve the quality, timeliness and accessibility of data on internal and international migration levels, trends and policies.

12.21. Research on sexuality and gender roles and relationships in different cultural settings is urgently needed, with emphasis on such areas as abuse, discrimination and violence against women; genital mutilation, where practised; sexual behaviour and mores; male attitudes towards sexuality and procreation, fertility, family and gender roles; risk-taking behaviour regarding sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancies; women's and men's perceived needs for [fertility regulation methods and sexual health services]; and reasons for non-use or ineffective use of existing services and technologies.

12.22. In the light of the persistence of significant mortality and morbidity differentials between population subgroups within countries, it is urgent to step up efforts to investigate the factors underlying such differentials, in order to devise more effective policies and programmes for their reduction. Of special importance are the causes of differentials, including gender

differentials, in mortality and morbidity, particularly at younger and older ages. Increased attention should also be paid to the relative importance of various socio-economic and environmental factors in determining mortality differentials by region or socio-economic and ethnic group. Causes and trends in maternal, perinatal and infant morbidity and mortality also need further investigation.